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THE INTERCHURCH
WORLD MOVEMENT
OF NORTH AMERICA

*Its Origin, Purposes
and Plans*

Headquarters of the Movement
111 Fifth Avenue
New York City

Interchurch World Movement of North America

Cooperation—Not Union

THE INTERCHURCH World Movement was organized for purposes of cooperation, not union.

It is a grouping of missionary, educational, and philanthropic organizations within the several communions or denominations and of allied interdenominational agencies. It is not a combination of ecclesiastical bodies.

It has not been proposed that any organization shall merge with any other, give up any of its distinctive features, or surrender any of its rights.

All of these organizations do many things of the same nature. They hold meetings and conventions for the deepening of the spiritual life and the development of interest in the varied activities of the Christian Church. They issue literature and conduct publicity campaigns. They raise money through special drives. They make surveys of the fields at home and abroad, and outline budgets of expenditures.

The question naturally arose: Cannot these organizations group themselves for mutual benefit, study one another's plans and literature, and actually do some things together; for example, conduct a united publicity and financial campaign?

In simple terms, the movement proposes to provide opportunity for its cooperating constituents to conduct their informational and financial propaganda annually at the same time.

In the process of such an enlarged cooperation there may be revealed to some Christian organizations, especially those which are already closely akin, the knowledge that consolidation or combination would produce better results for the entire cause of the Kingdom of God, and there may be supplementary actions of this character. The effort itself, however, is not

directed primarily to these questions, but rather to the more immediate and pressing one of cooperation.

This will involve cooperation in the development of the spiritual resources of the churches, the making of surveys and in the statement of the total needs of the world from the point of view of Protestant Christianity.

Each organization will maintain its own treasury and regulate its own affairs as heretofore. Each organization will pass upon the results of all surveys which affect its own work. The Central Committee will harmonize and coordinate these surveys, and prepare a total budget which will, for the first time in history, outline the approximate responsibility of the Christian Church for the world's welfare.

Desirable and Feasible

Facing the tremendous demands of this tragic hour following the world war, the churches can do no less than follow a course so obviously feasible as that outlined in the foregoing. That they may ultimately do very much more is the prayer of unnumbered disciples of Christ.

There is a great hymn of the church which we all sing with feeling. It contains the lines:

“We are not divided,
All one body we.”

The sentiment of this hymn is true so far as the spirit of union is concerned, but the fact remains that we are not only divided ecclesiastically, but we have been so thoroughly divided that we have not been able hitherto always to cooperate along lines of effort that are common to all. It is to reverse this policy, to discover spheres in which, and methods by which, we may work together in our mutual tasks that the Interchurch Movement has been called into being.

Victory came to the allied armies when the way was found to cooperate under a common plan. Since it was possible for these many

allied nations to fight together effectively without destroying their individuality or surrendering their sovereignty, leaders of the evangelical churches believe that it is possible for Christian bodies to work together in the same spirit with great benefit to each and with highly multiplied power in their united appeals and efforts.

First Steps

The call for a conference on this important subject was issued by the Foreign Missionary Board of the Presbyterian Church, South. Representatives of mission boards and allied interests in the United States and Canada were asked to meet in New York City on the seventeenth of December, 1918. One hundred and thirty-five persons responded, representing most of these organizations. Those present were unanimously agreed that the time had come for the working bodies of the several denominations to endeavor so to relate their activities as to present a united front before the world and at the same time secure greater efficiency, with a corresponding increase of influence and power, not to speak of the economies which would naturally result.

As a further evidence that the Spirit of God was moving, the Federal Council of the Churches at about the same time called a meeting at Atlantic City with a similar purpose in view. Ninety persons responded to this call, and the same unanimity of opinion was expressed as to the church's needs and obligations as in the other assembly.

At the New York meeting a committee of twenty was created, which included many of the outstanding Christian leaders of the United States and Canada. This committee was charged with the task of formulating a preliminary statement that might serve as a working basis for the development of plans for such a cooperative effort as seemed called for. This committee has been singularly successful in bringing together the leaders of the many Christian forces which are moving in the same direc-

tion. The result of their work is the Interchurch World Movement, whose organization is outlined more fully on another page.

The Response

The preliminary announcement of the purposes and plans of the Interchurch World Movement has called out a response from all parts of America that has seldom, if ever, been equalled. There is a conviction that this movement has come in answer to prayer. It is also looked upon as the natural culmination of the great wave of denominational forward movements which were begun under the pressure of needs greatly multiplied because of the war. The leaders of these movements have been quick to realize that the objectives which they had in mind could be realized in a still larger way by working together. They have been among the first to offer their time, their experience and their hearty support to the work of the Interchurch World Movement that under God's guidance a strong cooperative effort may be developed for the accomplishment of the task which in all its vital essentials is one.

The following boards and societies have already taken favorable action concerning the movement:

Foreign Missions Conference of North America.
Federation of Women's Boards of Foreign Missions of North America
Home Missions Council.
Council of Women for Home Missions.
Committee on Cooperation in Latin America.
Laymen's Missionary Movement.
Missionary Education Movement.
Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.
World's Sunday School Association.
International Sunday School Association.
Sunday School Council of Evangelical Denominations in the United States and Canada.
Council of Church Boards of Education.
World Christian Endeavor Union.
United Society of Christian Endeavor.
American Tract Society.
American Baptist Foreign Mission Society.
American Baptist Home Mission Society.
Foreign Mission Board of the Christian Church.
Christian Woman's Board of Missions.

of North America

American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.
Commission on Missions of the National Council of
Congregationalists.

American Missionary Association.

Congregational Home Mission Society.

Congregational Church Building Society.

Congregational Sunday School Extension Society.

Foreign Christian Missionary Society (Disciples of
Christ).

American Christian Missionary Society (Disciples of
Christ).

Board of Education of the Disciples.

Association for the Promotion of Christian Unity of
Disciples.

Board of Ministerial Relief of the Disciples.

National Benevolent Association (Disciples of Christ).

Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protes-
tant Episcopal Church in the United States.

American Friends Board of Foreign Missions.

Board of Home Missions Five Years' Meeting of Friends.

Executive Committee of the Five Years' Meeting of the
Friends in America.

Joint Centenary Commission of the Methodist Episcopal
Church (North and South).

Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal
Church.

Society of the United Brethren for Propagating the Gos-
pel Among the Heathen (Moravian Church in
America).

Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church
in the United States of America (North).

Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in
the United States of America (North).

Woman's Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian
Church in the United States of America (North).

Woman's Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian
Church in the United States of America.

Foreign Board of the Presbyterian Church in the United
States (South).

Home Missions Board of the Presbyterian Church in the
United States (South).

Committee of Christian Education and Ministerial Re-
lief of the Presbyterian Church in the United States
(South).

Board of Foreign Missions of the United Presbyterian
Church.

Board of Home Missions of the United Presbyterian
Church.

Freedman's Board of the United Presbyterian Church.

Convocation Committee of the United Presbyterian
Church.

Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in
America.

General Synod of the Reformed Church in the United
States.

Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in
the United States.

Interchurch World Movement

(List of endorsements continued)

Board of Home Missions of the Reformed Church in the United States.

United Missionary and Stewardship Committee of the Reformed Church in the United States.

General Board of Administration of the United Brethren in Christ.

Executive Committee of Home Missions of the United Brethren in Christ.

Home and Foreign Missionary Society of the United Evangelical Church.

Board of Church Extension of the United Evangelical Church.

Purpose and Scope

In order that there may be clear understanding regarding the purpose and scope of the movement, it seems best to quote certain sections from the report of the Committee of Twenty as adopted by the several bodies listed in the foregoing:

“To present a unified program of Christian service and to unite the Protestant churches of North America in the performance of their common task, thus making available the values of spiritual power which come from unity and coordinated Christian effort and meeting the unique opportunities of the new era.”

“While primarily a Home and Foreign Missionary Movement, the movement is to be broad enough to cover all those interests in the United States and Canada outside of the local church budget which are naturally related to the missionary enterprise through national agencies, denominational or interdenominational.”

Survey

A thorough united survey of the home and foreign fields of the world will be made for the purpose of securing accurate and complete data as to what ought to be done by the combined churches to meet the needs of the hour, and of at least the next five years.

Field Campaign

A field campaign will be undertaken to bring before the churches a knowledge of the needs of the community, the nation, and the world, as revealed by the surveys; to arouse the church to the realization of the urgency of cooperative

effort in meeting these needs, and also to inspire and complete an organization of the Christian forces competent to undertake an adequate world program. During the field campaign special emphasis will be put upon education, intercession and stewardship, and an attempt will be made to make effective the necessary resources of spiritual power, life and money needed to carry out the world program.

Conferences and Conventions

A vital feature of the entire movement will be that of its conferences and conventions. These will be held throughout the nation for the following purposes:

- First:* To make known the plans, ideals and program of the movement to all the churches and all the people.
- Second:* To secure the wider adoption of the principle of cooperative Christian effort among the churches and affiliated societies, in every county, local community, city, and state of the country.
- Third:* To assist in organizing interchurch committees, councils or federations for the immediate tasks which can only be met by united effort. These will contemplate permanence, in recognition of the growing desire upon the part of the leaders of Christian work for such co-operation and as the most practicable answer to the desire for unity, but will be encouraged and urged, in any event, to meet the demands of the special program of the Interchurch World Movement.
- Fourth:* To give increasing testimony to the place of the Christian Church as a fundamental agency to make permanent the ideals of an enduring world peace and to help in interpreting the type of gospel message which will contribute most to that end.

Fifth: To enlist and assist in training an adequate force of consecrated men and women to carry out a world-wide five-year program of the Christian Church, which shall be undertaken to meet the necessity revealed by the surveys now being made by the movement.

Several of these conferences have already been held, resulting in intense interest in the movement as a whole, the creation of many interchurch committees in local communities and cities and the strengthening and the enlargement of those already in existence.

So far as possible, the committee will seek to have the movement presented at all the conventions, assemblies, councils and conferences of the churches and allied societies during 1919.

United Budget and Treasury

“A united budget, which shall constitute the financial objectives and which shall be presented to the constituency of the cooperating agencies together with the educational and spiritual objective of the movement [will be established].

“It is clearly understood that the united movement shall not displace or interfere with the autonomy and responsibility of administration of the cooperating agencies, and it is urged that all funds should be sent as far as possible directly to the treasurers of such agencies from their natural constituencies, but in view of the necessity of provision for receiving and distributing any funds that might be contributed to it without being sent through denominational treasurers a central treasury [will] be established to which funds given for the united budget, but contributed through ordinary church channels may be reported by the cooperating agencies, and through which donors who so elect may contribute directly to the united budget.

“The functions of this central treasury shall not be administrative but to assemble and report the financial facts connected with the campaign, disburse funds for the common expenses of the

campaign, and serve as a clearing house between the cooperating agencies in order to insure to each its pro rata share of the funds secured, as agreed on in advance by its percentage in the united budget."

Financial Drive

A united financial campaign will doubtless be projected in the spring of 1920, or whenever in the judgment of the leaders of the movement the churches are sufficiently prepared to secure the funds shown by the surveys to be needed to carry through the world program on an efficiency basis.

Expenses of the Movement

The movement will be financed out of the funds secured and not by direct assessment upon participating bodies.

Plan of Organization

1. National

- (1) *A General Committee* of approximately one hundred and fifty;
- (2) *An Executive Committee* of twenty-one;
- (3) *A Canadian Council*, to which will be referred questions involved in the movement that are peculiar to the Dominion of Canada.

2. Divisional, State and Local

The organization, throughout the country in each division, state, county, and local community, of the Christian forces into some form of interchurch committee or federation.

See also the following leaflets:

No. 8, "Its Organization, with Suggestions for Its Development and Methods of Operation."

No. 11, "What It Is." (Contains names of members of the General Committee.)

No. 21, "Findings of the Cleveland Conference."

